

‘Ibaadah:

Definition, Pillars, Conditions, Characteristics, and Forms:

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ، وَبَعْدُ

Preface:

It is very important that we all understand the purpose for which we were created; otherwise we are likely to waste our time doing things, which are of no real value. For example, if everyone were sent to school without knowing why they were sent there, they would probably all start playing and would continue to do so until someone tells them what they are supposed to do there. Allaah, who is the Most Wise, would not create us without a purpose, because anyone who does something without any reason behind it is considered unreasonable and foolish, and Allaah could never be that. For example, if a man made a machine, which did not do anything, he would be looked as being crazy. Or if someone came and knocked on a door, but when asked whom he wanted, he answered: 'I don't know' and when asked why he knocked, he again answered: 'I don't know'. Such an individual would be taken to a madhouse for treatment. A wise man is one who plans his affairs well in advance and does things for good reasons. Therefore, Allaah, the All-Wise Creator of man, must have created us for a very important purpose.

We all know that for many, the purpose of our creation is not that obvious, otherwise everyone would be aware of it, and we would all be involved in doing similar things. Because our purpose was somewhat forgotten, Allaah chose to reveal it to us by sending Prophets and Messengers with divine Books containing the word of Allaah. He could have sent Angels with the Message or revealed it by some other miraculous means and no one would be in any doubt about their purpose, but Allaah chose to send men to mankind in order to test their Faith. He also sent along with these Prophets and Messengers certain miracles, to show the people that they were indeed sent by Allaah. Allaah explained in the Qur'aan, the last book of revelation brought by the last Prophet, ﷺ, exactly what that purpose was. Allaah said:

{Verily We have sent to every nation a messenger saying: 'Perform the 'Ibaadah (worship) of Allaah'. } [Surah al-Nahl (16): 37]

And He also said:

{I (Allaah) have created not the Jinn and Mankind except for My 'Ibaadah.} } [Surah al-Dhaariyat (51): 56]

The whole purpose of learning Tawheed is to establish the 'Ibaadah of Allaah. Therefore the purpose of life is the 'Ibaadah of Allaah and if we are to perform Allaah's 'Ibaadah properly, we must know exactly what it is and what it is not, as Allaah says:

{Know, therefore, that there is no one worthy of being worshiped except Allaah...} [Surah Muhammad (47): 16]

Allaah's command for the people is to recognize, to get well informed, and to seek knowledge that there is no one worthy of being worshiped except Allaah. Majority of the Muslims in the world are Muslims because their fathers are Muslims or their grandfathers were Muslims. Had their fathers been Hindus they too would have been Hindus or Christians etc, etc. Allaah's command is to understand and not to blindly follow the religion of your ancestors.

Being Muslims, it is the duty of every person to know why he is on this Earth. What is the purpose of creation? And last but not the least, what are his duties as a Muslim?

‘Ibaadah is often translated into English as “worship”, which is defined as: honor and respect mixed with love and fear toward God, a god or a sacred object. In ‘Arabic, ‘Ibaadah literally means: subservience (i.e. the willingness to serve in a low position) as well as submission (i.e. surrender of one’s self or rights). It comes from the word ‘Abd which means “slave or servant”.

Islaamically, ‘Ibaadah is to obey Allaah by doing whatever He ﷺ has commanded and by avoiding whatever He ﷺ has forbidden. This form of obedience is called ‘Ibaadah, because it involves serving Allaah and surrendering (giving up) one’s will to Allaah’s Will. This is why the best name a Muslim man can take is ‘Abd-Allaah (‘Abdullaah), i.e. slave or servant of Allaah.

‘Abdullaah Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that Allaah’s Messenger ﷺ said: **“Verily, the most beloved of your names to Allaah are ‘Abdullaah and ‘Abdur-Rahmaan.”** [Saheeh Muslim and Sunan Abu Dawood]

The Prophet ﷺ also preferred the name ‘Abd in reference to himself saying: **“Do not exaggerate your praise of me the way the Christians did to ‘Isaa (Jesus) the son of Maryam (Mary), for verily I’m only a slave (‘Abd) so refer to me as ‘Abd of Allaah and His Messenger.”** [Saheeh al-Bukhaaree]

‘Ibaadah is the core of Islaam because the word “Islaam” means the surrender of one’s will to Allaah, which is the highest level of obedience that one can reach. Our physical bodies obey Allaah’s laws, commonly called as the “laws of nature”, without any choice. Therefore, our bodies can be considered Muslims, in submission to Allaah like the rest of the creation. But our minds, which are run by our souls, have the ability to choose to submit to Allaah’s social and spiritual laws or not. When we make the mental choice to put our souls in line with the rest of creation by accepting Allaah’s supremacy, we then become Muslims in the full sense of the word. That choice is expressed in two particular ways:

In the words of the declaration of Faith (The Shahaadah):

“Laa ilaaha illal-laah”

There is nothing worthy of our ‘Ibaadah except Allaah, and

“Muhammadur-Rasoolullaah”

Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allaah.

From the acts of obedience or 'Ibaadah are: prayer (Salaah), obligatory charity (Zakaah), fasting (Saum), and pilgrimage (Hajj).

Since Islaam covers all areas of life, every act in a Muslim's life can become an act of 'Ibaadah. If he obeys Allaah's laws in all areas of his life by living according to the way of the Prophet ﷺ, then even the simplest of acts can become 'Ibaadah. For e.g., if one begins his daily meals with the short prayer: Bismillaah (In the name of Allaah); eats and drinks only with his right hand; avoids using gold or silver utensils; avoids over-eating by eating a third, and ends his meal with the short prayer: al-Hamdulil-laah (all praise is Allaah's), the everyday act of eating becomes an act of worship and submission to Allaah for which he will be rewarded.

True Khilaafah:

True Khilaafah is only established when the 'Ibaadah of Allaah is first established on earth; rather, Khilaafah is from the fruits of 'Ibaadah. Unlike those who think that establishing the Khilaafah is more important than 'Ibaadah or that there is no 'Ibaadah if there is no Khilaafah. As Allaah ﷺ says:

{Allaah has promised those among you who believe, and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the earth, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practice their religion, that which He has chosen for them (i.e. Islam). And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear (provided) they (believers) worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with Me. But whoever disbelieved after this, they are the Fasiqun (rebellious, disobedient to Allaah).} [Surah al-Noor (24): 55]

Therefore, if we are to fulfill our purpose in this life, we have to find out what Allaah wants from us in all areas of our lives. After finding out what is required of us, we then have to put that knowledge into practice so that it may result in righteous deeds. If our lives become a state of harmony with Allaah's laws, we then become higher and nobler than all of creation. Even the angels, who never disobey Allaah, will be on the lower level than us. This is the meaning of Allaah's command to the angels to bow down to Prophet Adam

{And when We told the angels to prostrate to Aadam, they all prostrated except Iblees.} [Surah al-Baqarah (2): 34]

This was Allaah's way of showing that man was created to be on a higher level than the angels and the rest of creation. Iblees, the Jinn, who was among the angels realized this and refused to prostrate to Aadam عليه السلام. When Allaah asked him why he did not bow down, he replied:

{I am better than him. You have created me from fire and created him from clay.} [Surah al-A`raaf (7): 12]

If we reach the higher level of submission through sincere 'Ibaadah, we fulfill the role of Khaleefah (vicegerent), who is responsible for governing the inhabitants of the earth, and maintaining law and order among all living and non-living beings. This is the purpose of man's creation in relation to the rest of creation. This state is the fulfillment of Allaah's statement:

{And when We informed the Angels saying: Verily I will place on earth a Khaleefah.} [Surah al-Baqarah (2): 30]

If, on the other hand, we refuse to make our lives conform to Allaah's laws and rebel like Iblees, we become lower than the lowest of creation. That is what Allaah meant when He described those who went against His laws saying,

{Verily they are like cattle, nay, they are even more lost from the path.} [Surah al-Furqaan (25): 44]

What follows is a translation of the article on the subject of 'Ibaadah, its' definition, its' pillars, its' and conditions that was printed in مجلة البحوث الإسلامية and which is available on the website of "alifta.com":

<http://www.alifta.com/Fatawa/FatawaChapters.aspx?languagename=ar&View=Tree&NodeID=11661&PageNo=1&BookID=2>

Part 1: Definition:

Linguistic meaning: It is Taa`ah (obedience) along with al-Khudhoo` (humbleness and submissiveness). For instance, a road is described as Mu`abbad, meaning: 'paved' or 'a trodden path', i.e. a path where people always tread. A camel is described as Mu`bad, meaning: a submissive camel.

Shar`ee meaning: There are many scholars who explained the definition of the word al-`Ibaadah, but the most comprehensive meaning is what Shaikh al-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said: "**Ibaadah is a collective term for everything that Allaah loves and is pleased with from amongst sayings and inward and outward actions.**" [al-`Uboodiyyah (1/44)] ^[1]

^[1] Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله also said: "**Ibaadah is obedience to Allaah by carrying out what He has commanded through tongues of His Messengers.**"

Some more definitions of the word al-Ibaadah:

Al-Baghawee رحمه الله: worship (`Ibaadah) is: Obedience (Taa'ah) coupled with humbling of oneself (Tadhallul), and submissiveness (Khudhoo`), and the slave ('Abd) is called as such due to his lowliness (Dhillaah) and his compliance (Inqyaad). [Sharh us-Sunnah (1/53)]

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله: worship ('Ibaadah) unites two principles: The extremity of love with the extremity of humbleness and submissiveness. So whoever you loved but were not submissive to, you are not a worshipper of him, and whomever were submissive to without (showing) love, you are not a worshipper (of him) until you are (both) loving and submissive. [Madaarij as-Saalikeen (1/74)]

Ibn Katheer رحمه الله: In the legislation it is an expression for what combines the perfection of love (Mahabbah), submissiveness (Khudhoo`) and fear (Khawf). [Tafseer Ibn Katheer (1/25)]

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله: A term that combines the perfection of love for Allaah, in its greatest level, and the perfection of humbleness, in its greatest level. For love devoid of humbleness and humbleness devoid of love is not considered worship, rather worship is what combines between the perfection of both matters. [Minhaaj us-Sunnah (3/290)]

Ibn al-`Uthaymeen رحمه الله: worship ('Ibaadah) is applied to two meanings: the (servant's) act of worshipping (at-Ta`abbud) and that with which one is worshipping (al-Muta`abbi bihi). So upon the first meaning, the meaning of worship is that a person humbles himself to His Lord by fulfilling His commands and avoiding His prohibitions, out of love (Hubb) for Him and veneration (Ta`dheem). Upon this description, it (Ta`abbud) returns back to the action of the servant. As for the second meaning, that worship ('Ibaadah) is applied with the meaning of that with which one is worshipping (al-Muta`abbi bihi), then Shaikh al-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله has defined it in a definition which is the best of the definitions... thus prayer then is worship, obligatory charity is worship, fasting is worship and the pilgrimage is worship. [Majmoo' Fataawa wa Rasaa'il (7/330)]

Source: <http://www.tawhidfirst.com/monotheism/articles/phcgo-the-definition-pillars-and-conditions-of-worship.cfm>

So in its summary it can be said: al-`Ibaadah is: when you act upon the Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم), hoping for a reward from Allaah.

Part 2: Pillars of 'Ibaadah:

Shaikh al-Islaam, Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said: **“Al-`Ibaadah which we are commanded to perform includes the meaning of humility and love. It contains extreme humility before Allaah تعالى together with the extreme love for Him عز وجل. The one who submits to someone with hatred is not worshiping him. And one who loves someone without submitting to him is likewise not worshiping him; this is like a man who loves his son and friends (but does not care for their needs). Therefore, neither love nor submission alone are sufficient in worshiping Allaah تعالى. The slave should love Allaah تعالى the most and He تعالى must be the greatest of all in his sight. Nothing deserves complete love and submission except Allaah تعالى.”** [al-'Uboodiyyah (1/48-49) and Majmoo` al-Fataawa (10/153)]

While discussing about “Hope”, Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله mentioned the following Aayah as evidence:

﴿أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ﴾

{Those whom they (the Mushrikeen) call upon (like 'Eesa - son of Maryam, 'Uzair, the Angels, etc.) desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord (Allaah), as to which of them should be the nearest and they ['Eesa, 'Uzair, the Angels, etc.] hope for His Mercy and fear His Torment.} [Surah al-Israa (17): 57]

Then Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله said: “(Allaah تعالى mentioned the three positions of Imaan upon which 'Ibaadah is built: 'al-Hubb (Love), al-Khawf (Fear) and al-Rajaa' (Hope).)” [Madaarij al-Saalikeen (2/36)]

So from the words of Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله it becomes clear that the acts of 'Ibaadah, which have been legislated, are established upon three pillars: Love, Hope and Fear.

The first pillar: Love

Here it means the love of servitude which necessitates humility, submissiveness, complete obedience and revering Allaah سبحانه وتعالى above all others. This type of love is specific, and one is not allowed to direct it towards anyone other than Allaah تعالى. The moment a person has this type of love for other than Allaah then he has committed Major Shirk (which takes him out of the fold of Islaam). Allaah تعالى says:

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُجْبِنُهُمْ كُحْبَرُ اللَّهِ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُ حُبًّا لِّلَّهِ ۝﴾

{And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allaah as rivals (to Allaah). They love them as they love Allaah. But those who Believe, love Allaah more (than anything else). } [Surah al-Baqarah (2): 165]

The Mushriks used to equate between Allaah تَعَالَى and their idols in their love for them (i.e. they used to love their idols as much as they used to love Allaah or even more). But as for the Believers, they sincerely love Allaah تَعَالَى more than anything else and do not associate anyone with Him (in worship). [Tareeq al-Hijratain (1/296)]

The evidence and the sign that one loves Allaah تَعَالَى is by obeying the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Allaah تَعَالَى says:

﴿فَإِن كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبِّنِي كُمْ دُنْوِبُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

{Say (O Muhammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to mankind): “If you (really) love Allaah then follow me, Allaah will (in return) love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allaah is Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful.} [Surah aal-`Imraan (3): 31]

Abu Sulaimaan al-Daaraanee said: **“When the hearts claimed to have love for Allaah تَعَالَى, Allaah revealed the test:**

﴿فَإِن كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبِّنِي كُمْ اللَّهُ﴾

{Say (O Muhammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to mankind): “If you (really) love Allaah then follow me, Allaah will (in return) love you.”}

Ibn al-Qayyim then said: **“So the evidence and the sign of love for Allaah are through the obedience of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.”** [Madaarij al-Saaliikeen (3/22)]

The second Pillar: Hope

It is to establish worship upon Noor (light) from Allaah (i.e. based on Kitaab and Sunnah) - hoping for reward from Him, or turning to Him in repentance. It is to hope for Allaah's forgiveness and pardon, and being extremely desirous of receiving more favors and blessings from Allaah تَعَالَى while not being under the false pretense that he is secured from Allaah's plan and punishment. Allaah تَعَالَى said:

﴿فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرُ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ﴾

{None feels secure from the Plan of Allaah except the people who are the losers.} [Surah al-A`raaf (7): 99]

Hope is a product of love, and it depends upon the level and the strength of one's love (i.e. the more strong the love, the more strong the hope). Fulfilling the rights of Allaah should be the person's main concern and should be beloved to him more than anything else (and what has been promised to him in return will surely come). Like how one cannot have hope except by attaining the means, i.e. doing that which has been commanded and shunning that which has been prohibited. Allaah تَعَالَى said:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَحَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

{Verily, those who have believed, and those who have emigrated (for Allaah's Religion) and have striven hard in the Way of Allaah, all these hope for Allaah's Mercy. And Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.} [Surah al-Baqarah (2): 218]

Allaah mentioned that they (the Believers) hope for His Mercy while striving to do (more and more) good deeds. But as for having hope, while one is persistent on leaving the Commandments and doing that which has been prohibited, is nothing but deception from Shaitaan.

The third Pillar: Fear

It is to worship Allaah تَعَالَى while fearing His punishment, and being cautious about the Hellfire, without letting this fear push one towards hopelessness and despair. Allaah تَعَالَى says:

﴿إِنَّهُ لَا يَنْأِسُ مِنْ رَّوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

{Certainly no one despairs of Allaah's Mercy, except the people who disbelieve} [Surah Yusuf (12): 87]

The level of fear depends upon the level of love, but the fear of the one who loves Allaah تَعَالَى (upon obedience) is not accompanied by depression and desolation in contrast to the fear of a disobedient person.

It is not allowed for one to have this type of fear from other than Allaah تَعَالَى, because it is part of worship by necessity. So whoever sets up rivals unto Allaah and fears him like the way he fears Allaah, then he is a Mushrik (a pagan); like those who fear the dead and the "saints". Allaah تَعَالَى says:

﴿فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَنَحْنُ أَنَاٰ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ﴾

{...so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) Believers.} [Surah aal-`Imraan (3): 175]

This is what the Mushrikeens used to believe regarding their “gods”; and through these “gods” of theirs they tried to frighten the Awliya’ of al-Rahmaan like the way they tried to frighten the Khaleel (Ibraaheem) عليه السلام to which he replied:

﴿وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا ۚ وَسَعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ۚ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ * وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا ۚ فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ ۚ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

{...and I fear not those whom you associate with Allaah in worship. (Nothing can happen to me) except when my Lord (Allaah) wills something. My Lord comprehends in His Knowledge all things. Will you not then remember? * And how should I fear those whom you associate in worship with Allaah (though they can neither benefit nor harm), while you fear not that you have joined in worship with Allaah things for which He has not sent down to you any authority. (So) which of the two parties has more right to be in security? If you but knew.} [Surah al-An'aam (7): 80-81]

We end this topic regarding the Pillars of `Ibaadah by reminding that all these three pillars should be combined together and that there should be a perfect balance between them. Whoever clings to only one of them, or goes in excess regarding one of them at the expense of others has not worshiped Allaah as He تعالى should have been worshiped.

Worshiping Allaah تعالى only upon love is the way of the Sufees; worshiping Allaah only upon hope is the way of the Murji'ah; worshiping Allaah تعالى only upon fear is the way of the Khawaarij. Worshiping Allaah تعالى upon love, hope and fear is the way of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamaa`ah, the path upon which every Muslim should strive to be.

Part 3: Conditions of `Ibaadah:

‘Ibaadah has two conditions, and ‘Ibaadah cannot be established except through them.

The first Condition: Ikhlaas (Sincerity of Intention)

It is to worship Allaah تَعَالَى seeking only His Countenance (and pleasure) and aiming for the Hereafter. This is the first of the conditions for the acceptance of the good deeds. Whenever a person deviates in his intentions, his deeds are not accepted because he has committed Shirk al-Akbar (Major Shirk) or Shirk al-Asghar (minor Shirk) depending upon his sincerity.

If at the very advent, the motivating factors to do a deed were to please someone other than Allaah, then this is (Major) hypocrisy (leading a person out of the fold of Islaam); but if at the beginning the intentions were to seek Allaah’s pleasure, but during the course of the actions he starts to beautify it to show-off, then this is Riyaa (Minor Shirk), but if this persists it may turn into Major Shirk.

From its proofs:

Allaah تَعَالَى says:

﴿وَمَا أَمْرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ﴾

{And they were not commanded except to worship Allaah, [being] sincere to Him in religion}
[Surah al-Bayyinah (98): 5]

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لَمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَاهَا مَذْمُومًا مَذْحُورًا * وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ كَانُوا سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا﴾

{Whoever should desire the immediate - We hasten for him from it what We will to whom We intend. Then We have made for him Hell, which he will [enter to] burn, censured and banished. But whoever desires the Hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while he is a believer - it is those whose effort is ever appreciated [by Allaah]. } [Surah al-Israa’ (17): 18-19]

﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَالًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

{So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.} [Surah al-Kahf (18): 110]

The Prophet ﷺ said: “O people! The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions, and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So, whoever emigrated for Allaah and His Apostle, then his emigration was for Allaah and His Apostle, and whoever emigrated to take worldly benefit or for a woman to marry, then his emigration was for what he emigrated for.” [Saheehain]

Narrated Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Allaah said: {I am most independent and free from needing any associates. Whoever performs a deed while associating partners with me (doing so for others along with Me), I shall abandon him along with his setting up of associates to Me (shirk)}” [Saheeh Muslim (7114)]

The second condition: Obeying the Sharee'ah (Legislation)

It means: One should not worship Allaah تَعَالَى except in the ways that has been legislated in the Book of Allaah (the Qur'aan) or what has been taught by the Prophet ﷺ. Every act of 'Ibaadah which opposes them is a Bid'ah – an ordainment for which Allaah has not consented, and it will not be accepted from the one who does them.

From its proofs:

﴿وَمَن يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ ۝ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ۝﴾

{And whosoever submits his face (himself) to Allaah, while he is a Muhsin (good-doer), then he has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold. And to Allaah return all matters for decision.} [Surah Luqmaan (31): 22]

{Submitting the face} is: having sincerity of intention while performing a good deed (i.e. to perform good deeds totally for Allaah's sake without any show-off or to gain praise or fame etc.)

While **{Muhsin}** means: doing good deeds in accordance with the Sunnah of Allaah's Messenger Muhammad ﷺ.

﴿وَمَن يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ إِلَسْلَامٍ دِيَنًا فَلَن يُفْلَمْ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ۝﴾

{And whoever seeks a religion other than Islaam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.} [Surah aal-'Imraan (3): 85]

The Prophet ﷺ said: “He who does something which we have not commanded, then it will be rejected.” [Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim]

Another narration:

“If any one introduces into this affair of ours anything which does not belong to it, it will be rejected.” [Saheeh Muslim] ^[2]

[2] Mutaaba`ah (following the Prophet ﷺ) in the acts of `Ibaadaat cannot be actualized, except when the action is in agreement with the Sharee`ah in six affairs:

a. Time (al-Zamaan): A lot of acts of `Ibaadah are bounded by time. A person is not allowed to deliberately do a thing before or after the said times. Example: a person cannot pray Maghrib before the Sunset; a person is not allowed to continue fasting after the Sun has set; the slaughter for Eid al-Adhha is to be done only after praying the Eid prayer; Zakaat al-Fitr is to be given before the Eid prayer etc.

b. Place (al-Makaan): Some acts of `Ibaadah are bounded by place. Example: Tawaaf is to be done only around the Ka`bah. `Itikaaf is to be done in the Masjid only. If a person performs the `Itikaaf in other than the Masjid, it will be opposing the Sunnah. On the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, the pilgrims have to be in `Arafah; anyone who does not reach this place on this day, has missed his Hajj.

c. Reason/Motive (al-Sabab): Some acts of `Ibaadah are done due to a reason involved in it. Example: “Sajdah al-Shukr” (Sajdah of thankfulness) is done when a person receives some pleasant news etc. and “Sajdah al-Tilaawah” (Sajdah due to recitation). Both these reasons are proven from the Sunnah. But doing a Sajdah specifically for making Du`aa, then this reason is not proven from the Sunnah. Marking out the days for Eid Milaad al-Nabee, or for the night of al-Israa wal-Mi`raaj, is not proven from the Sunnah or the actions of the Salaf as-Saaleh.

d. Type/Form (al-Jins): Certain acts of `Ibaadah have been prescribed on certain occasion. Example: In the state of anger, a person should seek refuge in Allaah from the accursed Shaitaan by saying “A`oodhu billaahi min ash-shaitaan ar-rajeem”, and this is the Sunnah. But if instead a person prays for blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ or something else, then he has gone against the Sunnah.

One more: Zakaat al-Fitr is to be given in the form of food grains (rice, raisins, dates etc.) only. Anyone giving away cash instead has not followed the Sunnah. Similarly, if a person sacrifices a horse instead of a camel or a sheep or a cow, then his sacrifice will not be accepted.

e. Characteristic/Manner (al-Kaifiyyah): Deliberately missing on some of the acts of Sunnah. Example: the Ahaadeeth are clear and authentic that the person should say “Aameen” after the Imaam has recited al-Faatihah. So anyone who does not recite it, after the truth has come to him, has gone against the Sunnah. Another example is that in prayer, everything has to be performed in order and in sequence. Anyone who changes the order - example prostrating before bowing, then this person’s prayer becomes void. Or if a man performs ablution, and he begins with washing the feet, then he wipes his head, then he washes his hands, then his face, then we say that his ablution is null and void, because it opposes the Sharee`ah in manner

f. Quantity (al-`adad): Any additions or deductions are in the acts of `Ibaadah are not allowed. Example: if a person deliberately prays Maghrib as 4 instead of 3, then his prayer is void. Similarly, there are only 7 rounds in Tawaaf around the Ka`bah; each prayer has certain units in it; certain adhkaar have to be done specific number of times – so a person is not allowed to exceed this numbers nor reduce them deliberately.

So, no matter how good the intention is, if the action is not in accordance with the Sharee`ah, it will be rejected. And Allaah is the Granter of success.

Part 4: Characteristics of `Ibaadah:

‘Ibaadah in Islaam has unique characteristics some of them are as follows:

1. Inclusiveness: This is evident from two aspects:

The first aspect: Types of `Ibaadah: `Ibaadah comprises of all types actions of the human being; actions of the heart, articulation by the tongue and actions of the limbs – irrespective of whether it is in regards to the relation between the slave with his Lord or between individuals and groups. The Texts (the Qur'aan and the Sunnah) have pointed out this inclusiveness in many places; some of them are as follows:

﴿ لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرُّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّنَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّيِّلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۖ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبُأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبُأْسِ ۖ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴾

{It is not al-Birr (piety, righteousness) that you turn your faces towards east and (or) west (in prayers); but al-Birr is (the quality of) the one who believes in Allaah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, and to Al-Masaakeen (the poor), and to the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set slaves free, performs al-Salaah, and gives the Zakaah, and who fulfill their covenant when they make it, and who are patient ones in extreme poverty and ailment (disease) and at the time of fighting (during the battles). Such are the people of the truth and they are al-Muttaqoon} [Surah (2): 177]

And the Prophet ﷺ said: “**Imaan (Faith) has over seventy branches, the uppermost of which is the declaration: Laa ilaaha illallaah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allaah); and the least of which is the removal of harmful object from the road, and modesty is a branch of Imaan.**” [Saheeh Muslim]

The second aspect: In regards to those who carry out the acts of `Ibaadah: `Ibaadah consists of all the different levels of a community and social groups, it does not specify one group while leaving out the other, and that is why they are addressed in a general manner, including everyone in that message.

Allaah تَعَالَى says:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴾

{O Mankind! Worship your Lord (Allaah), Who created you and those who were before you so that you may become Al-Muttaqoon.} [Surah al-Baqarah (2): 21]

﴿إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّةٌ كُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ﴾

{Truly! This, your Ummah is one Ummah, and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me (Alone).} [Surah al-Anbiyya' (21): 92]

2. Continuation: Similarly, from the characteristics of `Ibaadah in Islaam is continuation. It begins as a training at the age of understanding (i.e. when a child is seven years old), and it becomes an obligation when a person becomes mature, and it continues (to be an obligation) till death.

﴿فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ * وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ﴾

{So glorify the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves (to Him). And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (i.e. death).} [Surah al-Hijr (15): 98-99]

And from this verse, **{And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (i.e. death)}**, Imaam Ibn Katheer رحمه الله derived the evidence that: **“acts of worship, such as prayer and the like, are obligatory on man so long as his mind is sound, so he should pray according to his best ability.”**

3. Simplicity and easiness: Similarly, from the characteristics of `Ibaadah in Islaam are simplicity and easiness because it has been revealed from the One Who is al-Ra'ooof (full of kindness) al-Raheem (the Most Merciful) towards mankind; and `Ibaadah has been legislated for the benefit of mankind in this world and the Hereafter.

Allaah تَعَالَى said:

﴿طَهِ * مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتُشْفَقَى﴾

{TaHa. We have not sent down the Qur'aan unto you (O Muhammad) to cause you distress.} [Surah TaHa (20): 1-2]

﴿الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأَمِيَّ الَّذِي يَحِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْحَبَائِثَ وَبَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَعْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

{Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write whom they find written with them in the Tawraah and the Injeel, - he commands them for al-Ma`roof (i.e. Islaamic Monotheism and all that Islaam has ordained); and forbids them from al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds, and all that Islaam has forbidden); he allows them as lawful At-Taiyibaat [(i.e. all good and lawful) as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.], and prohibits them as unlawful Al-Khabaa'ith (i.e. all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.), he releases them from their heavy burdens (of Allaah's Covenant), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them.} [Surah al-A`raaf (7): 157]

﴿وَجَاهَدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جَهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِّلَّةً أَيِّكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ﴾

{And strive hard in Allaah's Cause as you ought to strive (with sincerity and with all your efforts that His Name should be superior). He has chosen you (to convey His Message of Islaamic Monotheism to mankind by inviting them to His religion, Islaam), and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship, it is the religion of your father Ibraaheem} [Surah al-Hajj (22): 78]

﴿شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَنْ شَهَدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلِيَصُمُّهُ ۖ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۚ لُّيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ﴾

{The month of Ramadhaan in which was revealed the Qur'aan, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month, he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allaah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you.} [Surah al-Baqarah (2): 185]

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾

{Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope.} [Surah al-Baqarah (2): 286]

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, the afternoons, and during the last hours of the nights.” [Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (39)]

Ibn Hajar رحمه الله commenting on the above Hadeeth says: “**This Deen, in comparison to other religion, has been termed as “easy”** because Allaah تعالى raised from this Ummah the burden which was there upon the nations before it. And the clearest example of this is that the Tawbah (repentance) of the previous nations was by killing each other*; whereas the Tawbah of this Ummah is by giving up the sin (which the person did), resolving not to repeat it again, and feeling remorseful over it.” [Fath al-Baaree (1/93)] ^{[3] [4]}

4. Tawqeefiyah: meaning: the acts of `Ibaadah are only established through Textual evidence from the Kitaab (of Allaah) and the Sunnah (of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم). No one has the right to add to it or to remove from it anything from himself. So a Muslim does not invent any forms of `Ibaadah from himself. He performs these acts of `Ibaadah because he has been commanded with them by His Lord.

Allaah تعالى said:

[3] Ibn Hajar رحمه الله is referring to the following Aayah of the Qur'aan:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمَ إِنَّكُمْ طَلَمْتُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ بِالْخَوْلِ وَلَمْ يَعْلَمْنَ فَاقْتُلُوا إِنَّكُمْ فَارِثُكُمْ لَكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِثِكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الرَّوَابِ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

{And (remember) when Moosaa said to his people: “O my people! Verily, you have wronged yourselves by worshipping the calf. So turn in repentance to your Creator and kill yourselves (the innocent kill the wrongdoers among you), that will be better for you with your Lord.” Then He accepted your repentance. Truly, He is the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.} [Surah al-Baqarah (2):54]

[4] Narrated Abu Musa رضي الله عنه said: The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “The example of Muslims, Jews and Christians is like the example of a man who employed laborers to work for him from morning till night for specific wages. They worked till midday and then said: ‘We do not need your money which you have fixed for us and let whatever we have done be annulled.’ The man said to them: ‘Don’t quit the work, but complete the rest of it and take your full wages.’ But they refused and went away. The man employed another batch after them and said to them: ‘Complete the rest of the day and yours will be the wages I had fixed for the first batch.’ So, they worked till the time of `Asr prayer. Then they said: ‘Let what we have done be annulled and keep the wages you have promised us for yourself.’ The man said to them: ‘Complete the rest of the work, as only a little of the day remains,’ but they refused. Thereafter he employed another batch to work for the rest of the day and they worked for the rest of the day till the sunset, and they received the wages of the two former batches. So, that was the example of those people (Muslims) and the example of this light (guidance) which they have accepted willingly.” [Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (558, 2271)]

Narrated Ibn `Umar رضي الله عنهما said: The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “Your example and the example of the people of the two Scriptures (i.e. Jews and Christians) is like the example of a man who employed some laborers and asked them: ‘Who will work for me from morning till midday for one Qiraat?’ The Jews accepted and carried out the work. He then asked: ‘Who will work for me from midday up to the `Asr prayer for one Qiraat?’ The Christians accepted and fulfilled the work. He then said: ‘Who will work for me from the `Asr till sunset for two Qiraats?’ You, Muslims have accepted the offer. The Jews and the Christians got angry and said: ‘Why should we work more and get lesser wages?’ (Allaah تعالى) said: {Have I withheld part of your right?} They replied in the negative. He said: {It is My Blessing, I bestow upon whomever I wish.}” [Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (2268, 2269, 3459, 5021)]

﴿شَرَعَ لَكُم مِّنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ﴾

{He (Allaah) has ordained for you the same religion (Islaam) which He ordained for Nooh, and that which We have inspired in you (O Muhammad)...} [Surah al-Shoora (42): 13]

He تعالى said:

﴿أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُم مِّنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذِنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴾

{Or have they partners with Allah (false gods), who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not allowed.} [Surah al-Shoora (42): 21]

He تعالى also said:

﴿وَمَن يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ ۝ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ۝﴾

{And whosoever submits his face (himself) to Allaah, while he is a Muhsin (good-doer), then he has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold. And to Allaah return all matters for decision.} [Surah Luqmaan (31): 22]

Imaam Ibn Katheer رحمه الله said: “Allaah تعلى tells us that whoever submits his face to Allaah, i.e., does deeds sincerely for His sake, submits to His commandments and follows His Laws, {while he is a Muhsin} i.e., doing what his Lord has commanded and abstaining from what He has forbidden.”

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “**He who does something which we have not commanded, then it will be rejected.**” [Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim]

Another narration:

“If any one introduces into this affair of ours anything which does not belong to it, it will be rejected.” [Saheeh Muslim] ^[5]

[5] Imaam Maalik رحمه الله said: “Whoever innovates an innovation in Islaam regarding it as something good, has claimed that Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم has betrayed his trust to deliver the message, for Allaah تعلى says: {This day I have perfected for you your religion.} And whatsoever was not part of the religion then, is not part of the religion today.” [Al-I’tisaam (1/64-65)]

5. Diversity: meaning: Allaah تَعَالَى divided the acts of `Ibaadah into various types in regards to the rulings regarding them. The level of approval varies; from the acts of `Ibaadah some are Waajib (obligatory), some are Haraam (forbidden), some are Mandoob (recommended), some are Makrooh (discouraged), and some are Mubaah (permitted). ^[6]

All these are for the ease of the slave of Allaah, taking into consideration their activities and their laziness from one angle, and as a test from another angle. In the actions which are Mubaah, the choice is upon the slave whether to do it or not; and in the actions which are Mandoob and Makrooh, there is lessening of the burden for him and a test to see who would excel more in doing good deeds. The one with weak Imaan may still do that which is obligatory and shun that which is prohibited but the real test is to see who will excel more. If the Imaan of the person is strong, he will not stop at only doing the obligatory, but he will try to excel in doing the optional deeds as well. Similarly, the one with strong Imaan will not stop at only avoiding the prohibited, but he will also avoid doing that which is discouraged.

[6]

- Waajib / Fard (obligatory): The doer of it is rewarded, and the one who neglects it has sinned and would be punished. Example: the five daily prayers, Zakaat, Fasting in Ramadhaan.
- Mandoob / Mustahab / Masnoon (recommended): There is reward for performing it, but there is no sin/punishment in neglecting it. Example: Sadaqah (optional charity other than Zakaah), optional fasting on Mondays and Thursdays.
- Mubaah / Jaa'ez (permitted): It is those acts which are neither forbidden nor recommended. There is no reward in doing it and no sin in leaving it. Example: eating the food prepared by the people of the Book.
- Makrooh (discouraged): There is a reward in avoiding it, but there is no sin or punishment for doing it. Example: divorce, eating garlic and onions before prayer.
- Haraam (forbidden): The doer of it has sinned and would be punished, and the one who shuns it will be rewarded. Example: gambling, fornication, consuming intoxicants.]

Part 5: Forms of `Ibaadah:

The acts of `Ibaadah upon which Tawheed is established are divided into three categories:

1. The actions of the heart.
2. The actions of the tongue.
3. The actions of the limbs.

Some acts of `Ibaadah are dependent on the actions of only one of the three, some are dependent on two, while some require the actions of all the three.

And as mentioned earlier, the rulings on the acts of `Ibaadah are divided into five: Waajib, Mustahab, Mubaah, Makrooh, Muhamarram.

So according to this, some of the actions of the heart are Waajib, some are Mustahab, some are Haraam, some are Makrooh, and some are Mubaah. Similarly, all the actions of the tongue and the limbs are also categorized accordingly.

A few examples will be cited regarding the obligatory and the forbidden acts for each of the three forms of `Ibaadah:

The first category: The actions of the heart:

From the actions of the heart which a slave must perform are: Ikhlaas (Sincerity of Intention), Tawakkal (reliance on Allaah), Mahabbah (loving Allaah and loving for the sake of Allaah), Sabr (patience), Inaabah (turning to Him in repentance), Khawf (fearing Him), Rajaa' (having hope in Allaah), Yaqeen (certainty), Tasdeeq (having firm belief).

From the actions of the heart which are forbidden are: Kibr (pride), Hasad (jealousy), Riyaa' (showing-off), `Ujab (self-amazement), Ghaflah (negligence), Nifaaq (hypocrisy), despairing of Allaah's Mercy, and despairing of relief from Allaah.

The second category: The actions of the tongue:

From the actions of the tongue which a person has to perform are: articulating the two testimonies of Faith (Shahaadatayn), recitation of the Qur'aan, doing the Adhkaar (remembrance of Allaah) in prayers and outside of it, greeting and replying to the Salaam, enjoining what is good, forbidding what is bad, teaching the ignorant, guiding the misguided, speaking the truth.

From the actions of the tongue which are forbidden or disliked are: the speech by which Allaah تَعَالَى is angered like speaking about Allaah and His Deen without knowledge, speaking in support of Bid`ah, doing the Adhkaar which are not mentioned in the Kitaab and the Sunnah, calling upon

other than Allaah, defaming, backbiting, insulting and harming a Muslim by speech, lying and fabricating, false testimonies.

The third category: The actions of the limbs:

This includes the actions of all the body parts and senses like the hands, the legs, the hearing, the sight, the taste, the smell and the touch.

The hands: From the actions of `Ibaadah which the hands have to perform are: assisting in making Wudhoo', Tayammum, the required actions during the prayers, while paying the Zakaah, working to feed himself and his family etc.

From the actions of the hands which are forbidden: to kill someone unjustly, taking someone's wealth, beating up someone who does not deserve it, playing games using dice, writing or sharing things which oppose the Kitaab and the Sunnah, writing immoral things, writing wrong things about someone, writing love poems about Ajnabee (unrelated) women, writing that which harms the Muslims regarding their Deen or their worldly affairs.

Legs and feet: From the actions of the legs which are `Ibaadah are: going to the Masjid to attend the congregational prayers, walking around the Ka`bah to make Tawaaf, walking between Safa and Marwa during Sa`ee, walking to fulfil the obligations commanded by Allaah and His Messenger, walking to attend circles of knowledge, standing for prayer etc.

From the actions which are forbidden: walking towards a thing in which there is disobedience to Allaah.

The hearing: From the actions of `Ibaadah of the ears are: listening to that which Allaah ﷺ and His Messenger have made it obligatory to listen, like listening to learn about Islaam and Imaan, the recitation of the Qur'aan during the prayers in which the Imaam recites audibly, listening to the Jumu`ah Khutbah.

From the things which are forbidden to listen to are: listening to music and singing, listening to idle and immoral talks, things which have Kufr in it or which leads to Kufr and Bid`ah, except if one is listening to it in order to refute it or so that he can bear witness against the one who said it.

The sight: from the actions of the eyes which are `Ibaadah are: looking into the Qur'aan to recite it and ponder over its meaning, looking into the books of knowledge for learning and teaching, looking at and pondering over the Aayaat (signs) of Allaah all around him.

From the things that are prohibited are: continuously looking at unrelated women and lust after them, peeping into someone's house without permission, looking at pics and reading immoral material.

The taste: From the acts which are considered as 'Ibaadah or which are allowed are: having Suhoor (breakfast) before Fasting, eating (dates) to break the Fast when the time is due, consuming food to keep oneself alive, taking medicine for curing oneself.

From the prohibited things are: consuming that which Allaah تَعَالَى has made Haraam (like intoxicants, swine, dead animals etc.), consuming poison which can be fatal, consuming something while the person is fasting.

The touch: The things which are allowed are: touching the wife, touching the Hajar al-Aswad (black stone) and the Rukn al-Yamaanee whenever possible.

The things which are not allowed are: touching unrelated women, touching a tree or a stone or a grave for seeking Barakah (blessing).

And Allaah is the One Who grants success

Appendix

Source: <http://www.tawhidfirst.com/monotheism/articles/phcgo-the-definition-pillars-and-conditions-of-worship.cfm>

The Comprehensive Definition

This now brings us to the definition we want to use for the purpose of this article, alluded to by Shaikh Ibn Uthaymeen (rahimahullaah), which is that of Shaikh al-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah, for it is the most precise, accurate and comprehensive definition for worship ('Ibaadah):

هي اسم جامع لكل ما يحبه الله ويرضاه من الأقوال والأعمال الظاهرة والباطنة

It ('Ibaadah) is a [comprehensive] term that brings together everything that Allaah loves and is pleased with, from the sayings and actions, [both] inward and outward.

This statement is explained by the Scholars of Ahl us-Sunnah with what can be summarized as follows:

A Term That Gathers...

That ('Ibaadah) is an (اسم جامع) (العبادة) a term (noun) that gathers together, it brings together, and what are those things? It is everything that Allaah loves and is pleased with.

What Allaah Loves and Is Pleased With...

So then how do we know that Allaah loves something or is pleased with it, we know it by way of what is in the revealed texts and this is generally known in one of a number of ways:

- a) Allaah praises the action
- b) Allaah praises the doer of the action
- c) Allaah orders the action.

And the same can be said for those things which are prohibited:

- d) Allaah dispraises the action (which means He loves and is pleased with its avoidance)
- e) Allaah dispraises the doers of a particular action (which means He loves those who avoid doing such an action)
- f) Allaah prohibits the action (which means Allaah loves and is pleased with its avoidance).

So when we find revealed texts in which we see the above; then we know what comes under worship - and this is the criterion, it is whatever Allaah loves and is pleased with.

Innovations are Not Considered worship...

So this excludes all innovated forms of worship which are not sanctioned or for which no evidence exists in its basis (this is an absolute innovation, completely, from all aspects), or if it exists in its basis, then (no evidence exists) for the particular manner or detail in which it is performed (this is relative innovation, from some aspects), it agrees with the Sharee'ah in its basis but disagrees with the Sharee'ah in its details. So al-Bid'ah al-Haqeeqiyah (an innovation in its essence, from all angles) and al-Bid'ah al-Idaafiyah (relative innovation, an innovation from some angles as opposed to others), then they do not come under

the definition of worship, since there is no proof that Allaah loves them or is pleased with them. And it is established that Allaah perfected the religion and left nothing and that the Messenger (alayhis salaam) fulfilled the trust and conveyed the complete truth. So worship is only what Allaah loves and is pleased with, and this excludes the innovations. And each act of worship which has a basis in the Sharee'ah, it must agree with the Sharee'ah in at least one or more of the following parameters (depending on what it is):

- a) in its number ('adad), b) in its place (Makaan), c) in its time (Zamaan), d) in its species (Jins), e) in its form or manner (Kaifiyyah), f) in its reason or cause (Sabab).

So with this, the act of worship is in accordance with the Sunnah and Sharee'ah.

Inward and Outward Speech and Action

Then the sum whole of what Allaah loves and is pleased with is made up of speech (Qawl) and action ('amal), and this covers both what is inward and outward, and this then provides us with four categories into which everything that is worship enters into:

The inward speech, which is the speech of the heart, which is its belief, meaning the beliefs held in the heart, these are the sayings of the heart.

Then the outward speech, which is the speech of the tongue, what is expressed with the tongue, which includes testifying with the Kalimah, and remembering Allaah, and asking forgiveness, and enjoining good and forbidding evil and so on.

Then the inward actions which are the actions of the heart, its emotions and feelings, such as love, fear, hope, reliance and so on.

Then the outward actions, which are the actions of the limbs, the prayer, fasting, giving charity and so on.

So (العبادة) is a term that brings together what? Whatever Allaah loves and is pleased with, and this is summarized as the inward and outward sayings and actions, and this includes what takes place in the heart (of speech and action) and what takes place upon the tongue (of speech) and what takes place on the limbs (of action). And all of this is bound by the Sharee'ah, only what Allaah loves and is pleased with, which means worship is only that which Allaah has legislated and we know that He has legislated it, meaning He loves it and is pleased with it, and we know that something is worship through the manner in which it has been mentioned in the Book and the Sunnah.

Knowing and Understanding This Definition

So this is the understanding of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa`ah of (الجادة), worship, and so you should learn and memorize this definition, along with its concise explanation, such that if you are asked by anyone, a non-Muslim, or a Muslim, then you should be able to explain it finely, you should be able to explain precisely what is worship in Islaam, and how it differs from what is found in other religions and from what is found amongst the sects of Islam who have errors and mistakes in this field and who have followed the way of those nations before us, who departed from what their Prophets and Messengers brought them, and made Tahreef (distortion) and Tabdeel (alteration, replacement) of their religion, and thus began to worship with that for which Allaah sent down no authority.